



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 6

1445 ROSS AVENUE, SUITE 1200

DALLAS TEXAS 75202-2733

January 26, 1998

STATEMENT OF FINDINGS

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has performed an environmental impact assessment in accordance with the procedures at 40 CFR Part 6, "*Procedures for Implementing the Requirements of the Council on Environmental Quality on the National Environmental Policy Act*," for the proposed awarding of grant funds from the Border Environmental Infrastructure Fund (BEIF) to the City of Alton, Hidalgo County, Texas.

The City of Alton proposes to construct a gravity wastewater collection system and provide sanitary sewage service to Alton and the 45 colonias in its planning area through the City of McAllen Wastewater Treatment Plant #3. There are approximately 1,331 homes in the planning area with an estimated population of 6,535. Approximately 80 percent of the homes have septic systems, while the remainder use open cesspools or pit privies. Most of the septic systems do not meet State or county standards, primarily due to the small size of the lots and the density of development. The proposed project will eliminate the use of privies and septic systems.

The proposed project will be financed through grants and loans from the Colonias Wastewater Treatment Assistance Program (CWTAP), the Economically Distressed Areas Program (EDAP) and State Water Pollution Control Revolving Fund (SRF), all administered by the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB). Alton has also received a separate grant from the Rural Development Agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture to assist area residents in connecting into the system. The BEIF grant will be used for loan transition financing assistance during the initial phase of the project.

On the basis of the environmental assessment, the EPA made a preliminary Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) determination that coverage of the proposed action would not result in a significant adverse impact to the environment and that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was not warranted. The preliminary FNSI was issued for public notice on November 29, 1997, and the 30-day comment period expired on December 29, 1997. No comments were received from interested agencies, groups or individuals. Accordingly, this Statement of Findings (SOF) is being issued to finalize the EPA's NEPA process.

Responsible Official,

Jerry Clifford
Acting Regional Administrator